Food Question in Cochin State—*(cont.)*

*മിസ്റ്റർ പി. നാരായണമേനോൻ: സർ, ഏതാണ്ടും സംഗതികളും ഇതിനെ സംബന്ധിച്ച് ഗവൺമേണ്ടിന്റെ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരണമെന്നമാത്രമേ ഞാൻ കരുതുന്നുള്ളൂ. അതിൽ ഒരു സംഗതി, അതായതു് വിലനിയന്ത്രണത്തെ കുറിച്ചു് ഇന്നലെ ഞാൻ ഏതാണ്ടും ദീർഘമായിട്ടുതന്നെ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞു. സാധനങ്ങളുടെ വില നിർണ്ണയിക്കുമ്പോൾ അയൽ രാജ്യങ്ങളിലെ വിലയിൽ വലിയ കൂടുതൽ കുറവു് കൂടാതേയും, ഒരു പദാർത്ഥത്തിന്റെ വില നിർണ്ണയിക്കുമ്പോൾ, ആ പദാർത്ഥങ്ങൾ വാങ്ങിക്കുന്ന ആളുകൾക്കു ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുകൂടാതെകണ്ടു് ധാരാളം വാങ്ങിക്കത്തക്കവിധത്തിലുള്ള ഈ ഏർപ്പാടുകൾ ചെയ്യുന്നതിനെക്കുറിച്ചും, കാർഷികോല്പന്നങ്ങളുടെ വില നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്നതോടൊപ്പംതന്നെ കാർഷികോപകരണങ്ങളുടെ വിലയും, കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെ കൂലിയും നിയന്ത്രിക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെ ആവശ്യകതയെക്കുറിച്ചും ഞാൻ ഇവിടെ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചുകഴിഞ്ഞു. ഇനി നെല്ലെടുപ്പിനെ കുറിച്ചാണു് രണ്ടുവാക്കു പറയുവാനുള്ളതു്.

നെല്ലെടുക്കുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി ഓരോ താലൂക്കിലാരെല്ലാമാരേയും അവരുടെ കീഴിൽ ഓരോ വില്ലേജുകളിലും ഓരോ സ്പെഷ്യൽ പാവ്വ്തൃക്കാരെന്മാരേയും, ഓരോ മേനോന്മാരേയും, അതിനു പുറമെ ഒരു പാഡിപർച്ചേയ്സിംഗ് ഓഫീസ്സരേയും ഇങ്ങിനെ അനേകം ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരെ നിയമിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടു്. ഇവർ ഓരോരുത്തരും വെവ്വേറേയോ, അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ഒത്തുചേർന്നോ അവരുടെ ഈ ജോലികൾ ശരിയായി നിർവ്വഹിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നു് പരിപൂർണ്ണമായി മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാൻ എനിക്കു് സാധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. അവർ അധികം ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരുള്ള നിലക്കു് അവർ ഓരോരുത്തരും അവരവക്കു് തോന്നിയസമയത്തു് നെല്ലെടുപ്പിനു് ചെന്നു് ജനങ്ങളെ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടിക്കുകയാണെന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അതു സഹിക്കത്തക്കതായിരിക്കുമെന്നു് വിചാരിക്കുവാൻ ന്യായമില്ല. അവരുടെ ഉത്സാഹത്തിന്റെ ഫലമായിട്ടു് കർഷകരുടെ ആവശ്യം കഴിച്ചു് ബാക്കിയുണ്ടാവുന്ന നെല്ലു മുഴുവൻ സിദ്ധിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നു് വിചാരിക്കുന്നതിൽ ന്യായം കാണുന്നില്ല. അങ്ങിനെ നെല്ലുമുഴുവനും വാങ്ങിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ നിശ്ചയമായും ഇവിടെ കരിഞ്ചന്ത ഏർപ്പാടുകളോ, നെല്ല അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കു് കടത്തുന്ന സമ്പ്രദായമോ ഉണ്ടാകുമായിരുന്നില്ല. ഇപ്പോഴും കരിഞ്ചന്തയിൽ ധാരാളം സാമാനങ്ങൾ വാങ്ങുവാൻ കിട്ടുമെന്നാരണ പൊതുജനങ്ങളുടെയിടയിലുണ്ടു്, അതു പരമാർത്ഥവുമാണു്; അതുപോലെ അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കു് നെല്ല കടത്തികൊണ്ടുപോകുന്ന സമ്പ്രദായം ഇപ്പോഴുമുണ്ടു്. ഇതു രണ്ടും ഇല്ലാതാകണമെങ്കിൽ കൃഷിക്കാരുടെ ആവശ്യം കഴിച്ചു് ബാക്കിയുള്ള നെല്ലു മുഴുവൻ അവരിൽനിന്നും ഈടാക്കുന്നതിനു് ഗവൺമേണ്ടിൽനിന്നു് നിയമിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർക്കു് സാധിക്കുകതന്നെ വേണം. അതു സാധിക്കുന്നില്ലെന്നുള്ളതു് ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ ആ വകുപ്പിന്റെ ഒരു ന്യൂനതയാണു്. ഇനി മറെറാന്നു്, ബ്ലോക്കു് മാർക്കറിൽ വ്യാപരിക്കുന്നവരേയും, ക്ഷേണപദാർത്ഥങ്ങൾ അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കു് കടത്തികൊണ്ടു പോകുന്നവരേയും, ശിക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള നിയമം ഇവിടെ ഉണ്ടാക്കീട്ടുണ്ടു്. ഈ നിയമങ്ങൾ വേണ്ടതുപോലെ നടപ്പിൽ വരുത്തുന്നതിനു് ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടിനു് സാധിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെന്നുള്ളതു് ആ വകുപ്പിന്റെ മറെറാരു ന്യൂനതയാണു്. രണ്ടുകൊല്ലംമുമ്പു് ഒരു ചെറിയ കുട്ടിയെ ജയിലിൽ ശിക്ഷിച്ചിട്ടിരിക്കുന്നതു് എനിക്കു കാണുവാനിടയായി. ആ കുട്ടി ഏഴാം ക്ലാസ്സിൽ പഠിച്ചിരുന്ന ഒരു കുട്ടിയാണു്. ശിക്ഷിക്കുവാനുള്ള കാരണം എന്താണെന്നു് ചോദിച്ചപ്പോൾ ആ കുട്ടിയുടെ വീടു് ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലാണു്. കൊച്ചിയിൽ ആ കുട്ടിയുടെ വകയായി ഒരു പറമ്പുണ്ടു്, ആ പറമ്പിൽ കുറെ കപ്പകൃഷിചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ടു്; ഒരു നേരത്തെ ആഹാരത്തിനുവേണ്ടി കുറച്ചു് കപ്പ പറിച്ചെടുത്തു് അതുത്തിയിലുള്ള വീട്ടിലേക്കു് കൊണ്ടുപോയവഴിക്കു് ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങൾ അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കു് കടത്തികൊണ്ടുപോകുവാൻ പാടില്ലെന്നുള്ള കുറകരമായ നിയമത്തിന്മേൽ ആ കുട്ടിയെ പിടികൂടുകയും, ആ ഒരു ചെറിയകാര്യത്തിന്നു് ആ കുട്ടിക്കു് ആറുമാസത്തെ കഠിനശിക്ഷ വിധിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തുവെന്നാണു് മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിച്ചതു്. ഇതുപോലെതന്നെ നാഴി അരിയും, ഇടങ്ങഴി അരിയും മറവു ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലേക്കോ, തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലേക്കോ കടത്തികൊണ്ടുപോയിയെന്ന കുറത്തിന്മേൽ സാധുക്കളായ അനേകംപേരെ ശിക്ഷിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതായി എനിക്കറിയാം. എന്നാൽ നേരെമറിച്ചു് വലിയ, വലിയ സാധനങ്ങളും കടത്തിക്കൊണ്ടു പോകുന്ന വലിയധനാഢ്യന്മാരും, പ്രമാണികളുമായ ആളുകളെ കണ്ടുപിടിക്കുന്നതിനോ, അവരെ ശി

* Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

ക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന്നോ വളരെ ചുരുക്കം മാത്രമേ സാധിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളൂ. ഈയിടെ കൊച്ചികണയന്നൂർ താലൂക്കിൽ ഒരു നേരംപോക്ക് ഉണ്ടായി. താസിൽദാക്ക് ഒരു ദിക്കിൽ ക്ഷാ ഠ.ൽ ചിലപാ നം പറമ്പെല്ലു വ്യാജമായി ഒരിടത്തു വെച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നു ഒരു വർത്തമാനംകിട്ടി. അതനുസരിച്ചു സ്ഥലം പരിശോധിച്ചപ്പോൾ നെല്ലു അവിടെയുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ആ നെല്ലു താസിൽദാർ അ ളുനോട്ടത്തു. ഇതു കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ട രണ്ടോ, മൂന്നോമാസമായി. ഇപ്പോഴും ആ നെല്ലിന്റെ ഉടമസ്ഥൻ ആരാണെന്നു കണ്ടു പിടിക്കുവാൻ താസിൽദാക്കോ, പോല്ലിസ്സുദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാ ക്കോ, എക്സൈസ്സു ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാക്കോ ആക്കും ഇതുവരെ സാധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. ആ നെല്ലിന്നു രശീതി വാങ്ങീട്ടുള്ളതു താസിൽദാരുടെ പേരിലാണെന്നാണു ഞാൻ അറിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളതു. ആ നെല്ലു പ്രബലന്മാരും നാട്ടിൽ സ്വാധീനശക്തിയുള്ള ചിലരുടെ വകയായിരുന്നു. അതു കൊണ്ടു ആ നെല്ലിന്റെ ഉടമസ്ഥൻ ആരാണെന്നു കണ്ടു പിടിക്കുന്നതിന്നോ, ഉടമസ്ഥനെ കണ്ടു പിടിച്ചു ഇപ്പോൾ നിലവിലുള്ള നിയമമനുസരിച്ചു ശിക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന്നോ, ഇന്നത്തെ സിവിൽ സപ്ലൈസു ഡയറക്ടക്കോ, ഗവൎമ്മെണ്ടിന്റെ മറ്റു വകുപ്പുകാൎക്കോ സാധിച്ചുട്ടി ല്ലെന്നുള്ളതു നിശ്ചയമായും ലജ്ജാവഹമായ ഒരു കാര്യമാണു.

മിസ്റ്റർ ടി. എ. രാമചന്ദ്രയ്യർ: അതിന്നു വില കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ലേ?

മിസ്റ്റർ പി. നാരായണമേനോൻ: ഇല്ല. ഇതുപോലെ ആമ്പല്ലൂരിൽ ഒരു കേസ്സുണ്ടാ യി. അതും പ്രമാണികളുടെ കേസ്സാണു. നെല്ലു തിരുവിതാംകൂർ അതൃത്തിയിലേക്കു കട ത്തികൊണ്ടു പോകുമ്പോൾ വഴിക്കവെച്ചു പിടിക്കുടി വാസ്തവത്തിൽ ആ നെല്ലു തിരുവി താംകൂറിൽ ആക്കോ ഒരാൾക്ക വിറ്റതാണെന്നാണു ജനങ്ങളുടെയിടയിലുള്ള വർത്തമാനം. പഞ്ചായത്തു പ്രസിഡണ്ടിന്റെ പടിക്കൽ വെച്ചാണു ഈ കേസ്സു പിടികിട്ടിയതു. ഈ ദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ അനുജനായിരുന്ന നെല്ലുടമസ്ഥൻ. ഒടുവിൽ ആ കേസ്സു ഒതുക്കിത്തീൎത്തു. ഇ ങ്ങിനെ പ്രമാണികളായിട്ടുള്ളവരും, സ്വാധീനശക്തിയുള്ളവരുമായ ആളുകൾ കുറ്റം ചെയ്തു കയാണെന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അതു കണ്ടുപിടിക്കുവാനോ അവരെ ശിക്ഷിക്കുവാനോ സാധിക്കുക യില്ല. നേരെമറിച്ചു സാധുക്കളായിട്ടുള്ള ആളുകളെ നിസ്സാരമായ കുറ്റത്തിന്നു ശിക്ഷിക്കു കയും ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ടു.

മിസ്റ്റർ എ. ഈച്ചരമേനോൻ: കുറ്റം ചെയ്തിട്ടല്ലെ?

മിസ്റ്റർ പി. നാരായണമേനോൻ: കുറ്റം ചെയ്യാത്തതിന്നും കൂടി ശിക്ഷിക്കുന്നുണ്ടു.

പിന്നെ വേറെയൊരു ന്യൂനതയുള്ളതു ചില ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ കൈക്കൂലി ആവശ്യ പ്പെടുന്നുണ്ടെന്നും, അതിനെ സംബന്ധിച്ചു മേലുദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരോടു ആവലാധി പറയു മ്പോൾ അതിന്നു ശരിയായ നടപടി എടുക്കുന്നതിന്നു പകരം അവർ അമാന്തം കാണിക്ക ുന്നുവെന്നുള്ളതാണു. എന്നാൽ കൈക്കൂലി ആവശ്യപ്പെടാൻ വിരോധമില്ലെന്നു വിശ്വസി ക്കുന്ന ഒരാളാണു ഞാൻ. അതിന്നുള്ള കാരണം ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടു അധി:കൃതന്മാർതന്നെ നി യമത്തിന്നു വിധേയമായിട്ടല്ല അവരുടെ കൎമ്മങ്ങളും പ്രവൃത്തികളും ചുമതലകളും നിവ്വ ഹിക്കുന്നതു എന്നുള്ളതിന്നു അനേകം ദൃഷ്ടാന്തങ്ങളുണ്ടു. കരിഞ്ചന്തയിലുള്ള വ്യാപാരവും, ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങളും അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങളിലേക്കു കടത്തികൊണ്ടു പോകുന്നതിനെ തടയേണ്ടതും, അതു കണ്ടുപിടിക്കേണ്ടതുമായ ചുമതല ശ്രീമാൻ എക്സൈസ്സു ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടിന്നാണു. എന്നാൽ എക്സൈസ്സു ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടിന്റെ നിയമങ്ങൾക്കു നേരെ വിപരീതമായിട്ടാണു പല കാര്യങ്ങളിലും പ്രവൃത്തിച്ചു കാണുന്നതു. കള്ളുഷാപ്പുകൾ ലേലം ചെയ്യുന്നതിന്നു മുമ്പു അതു ഇന്നിന്ന സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ വേണമെന്നു നിൎണ്ണയിച്ചു ഗസ്സറ്റിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധം ചെയ്യാറുണ്ടു ഇതു എക്സൈസ്സു മാനുവലിലുമുണ്ടു. ഈ നിബന്ധനകൾക്കു യോജിച്ചവിധത്തിൽ ഒരു ഷാ പ്പു പോലും ഇന്നു ഈ രാജ്യത്തുണ്ടാകുമെന്നു എക്സൈസ്സു ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെണ്ടിന്നു ഉണ്ടെന്നു പ റയുവാൻ സാധിക്കുമെന്നു എനിക്കു തോന്നുന്നില്ല. നിയമങ്ങളെ പാലിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണു ഈ വക ഷാപ്പുകൾ സ്ഥാപിക്കുന്നതിന്നു അനുവാദം കൊടുക്കുന്നതു. ഇങ്ങിനെ ഡിപ്പാർട്ട മെണ്ടു മേലധികാരികൾ തന്നെ മനഃപൂൎവ്വം നിയമം ലംഘിക്കുന്ന നിലക്കു അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കീഴിലുള്ള മറ്റു ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ നിയമം ലംഘിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അതിന്നു എത്രത്തോളം പ്രാധാന്യം ആ മേലധികാരി കല്പിക്കുമെന്നാണു ഞാൻ ചോദിക്കുന്നതു. അതുകൊണ്ടു ഈവക സംഗതികളിൽ അവർ കൈക്കൂലി ചോദിക്കുന്നതും, വ്യാജമായിട്ട വ്യാപാരം ചെ യ്യുന്ന ആളുകൾക്കു വ്യാജമായിട്ടു നടത്തുന്ന ആ വ്യാപാരത്തെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന്നും പലതും പ്രവൃത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നു ജനങ്ങൾ വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അതിൽ എതാണ്ടു പര മാൎത്ഥമുണ്ടെന്നുള്ളതിന്നു യാതൊരു സംശയവുമില്ല. അതുകൊണ്ടു ഇനിമേലാലെങ്കിലും ഈ

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ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെണ്ടു് മേധാവികൾ നിയമത്തിനും, വ്യവസ്ഥകൾക്കും യോജിച്ചുവിധത്തിൽ പ്രവൃത്തിച്ചു് അവരുടെ കീഴിലുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർക്കു് നിയമത്തിനേയും, വ്യവസ്ഥകളേയും മാഹാത്മ്യം ഇന്നതാണെന്നു് മനസ്സിലാക്കികൊടുത്തും, അവർ കുറ്റം ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ടെന്നു കണ്ടാൽ അവരെ വേണ്ടവിധത്തിൽ ശിക്ഷിച്ചു്, നാട്ടിൽ കൂടുതൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യവും മര്യാദയും ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതിനും ഈ വക വ്യാപാരങ്ങളെ ഇല്ലായ്മ ചെയ്യുന്നതിനും, വേണ്ടതായ പരിശ്രമം ചെയ്യുമെന്നു് ഞാൻ വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു. ഇതു് ഇങ്ങിനെ ചെയ്യേണ്ടതാണെന്നുള്ളതു് ഞാൻ ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടിന്റെ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ കൊണ്ടു വരികയാണു് ചെയ്യുന്നതു്.

ഇനി വേറെയൊരു സംഗതി. ഞങ്ങൾക്കു് ഇന്നായിന്നതാണു് ആവശ്യമെന്നും ആ ആവശ്യങ്ങളെ തന്നത്താനെ നിർവ്വഹിക്കുന്നതിനു് ഞങ്ങളുടെ കഴിവനുസരിച്ചു് ഞങ്ങളെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള അധികാരമൊന്നും ഇവിടെ കാണുന്നില്ല. പൊതുവെ ജനങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ ഒന്നുകൂടിയാലോചിച്ചു് ഒരു കായ്യം തീരുമാനിക്കാമെന്നു് വെച്ചാൽ അതിനു ഇപ്പോൾ നിലവിലുള്ള നിയമം അനുവദിക്കുന്നുമില്ല. പൊതുയോഗങ്ങളെല്ലാം ബാൻചെയ്തിരിക്കുകയാണു്. അങ്ങിനെ ഞങ്ങളുടെ കായ്യങ്ങളെ കുറിച്ചു് ഞങ്ങൾക്കു ആലോചിക്കുവാനും, തീരുമാനിക്കുവാനും അധികാരമില്ലാത്തേടത്തോളം കാലം ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു് ഞങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യങ്ങളും, അത്യാവശ്യങ്ങളും എന്തെല്ലാമാണെന്നു് അറിഞ്ഞു് അതാതു സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ ചുമതലപ്പെട്ട ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരെകൊണ്ടു് വേണ്ടതു് അന്വേഷിപ്പിച്ചു് നിർവ്വഹിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടതു് ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടിന്റെ ഒരു കടമമാത്രമാണു്. ഭക്ഷണം കൂടാതെകണ്ടു് മനുഷ്യർക്കു ജീവിക്കുവാൻ സാദ്ധ്യമല്ല. അങ്ങിനെയുള്ള ഭക്ഷണസാധങ്ങൾ കഴിയുന്നേടത്തോളം നല്ല സാധനങ്ങളായിട്ടു വിതരണം ചെയ്യേണ്ടതു് ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടിന്റെ ചുമതലയാണു്. അതിനു പകരം ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങളാണെന്നു പറഞ്ഞു് ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു വിതരണം ചെയ്യുന്ന സാധനങ്ങൾ മൃഗങ്ങൾപോലും ഉപയോഗിക്കുമോയെന്നുള്ള കായ്യം വളരെ സംശയമാണു്. പുഴുക്കലരിയെപ്പറ്റി ഇവിടെ ആരോ പറയുന്നതുകേട്ടു. പുഴു, കല്ലു, അരിയും കൂടിയാണു് പുഴുക്കലരിയായിട്ടു ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു കൊടുക്കുന്നതെന്നു്. എന്നാൽ പുഴു എത്ര കൂടിന്നാലും, കല്ലു എത്ര കിടന്നാലും അതെല്ലാം അരിയിൽനിന്നു് പെറുക്കികളയാവുന്നതാണു്. എന്നാൽ ചില അരി പാകം ചെയ്യുന്ന ചോറിന്റെ അരികിൽ ചെന്നിരിക്കാനുള്ള വിഷമമോർക്കുമ്പോൾ ഒരു ൧൦൦ സംവത്സരം വേണമെങ്കിൽ ടഞ്ചിംഗ് ഗ്രൌണ്ടിൽ താമസിക്കാമെന്നിരുന്നാലും ഈ ചോറിന്റെ മുമ്പിൽ ഒരു സെക്കണ്ടുപോലും ഒരു മനുഷ്യനു ഇരിക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നതല്ല. അത്ര ദുർഗ്ഗന്ധമുള്ള അരിയായിരിക്കും ചിലപ്പോൾ സപ്ലൈ ചെയ്യുന്നതു്. ചിലപ്പോൾ തവിടോടുകൂടിയ ഒരു തരം അരി. തവിടിലാണു് വിറ്റാമിൻ അധികമുള്ളതു് എന്നാണു് ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു പറയുന്ന പ്രിൻസിപ്പിൾ. തവിടോടുകൂടിയ അരിയുടെ ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കുന്നതിലാണു് കൂടുതൽ ആരോഗ്യം ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതു്. ഒരു പക്ഷെ അതു ശരിയാണെന്നിരുന്നാലും ഈ തവിടോടുകൂടിയ അരി എത്രകാലം മുമ്പു് ശേഖരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതാണു്; അതിനു വല്ല കേടും തട്ടീട്ടുണ്ടോ, ഇതൊന്നും നോക്കാൻ ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടിനു ഭാവമില്ല. ഇങ്ങിനെയുള്ള അരി എത്രതന്നെ മോശമാണെന്നിരുന്നാലും ഒരു ഓഹരിയെങ്കിലും വാങ്ങിച്ചുകൊള്ളണമെന്നു് നിർബ്ബന്ധമുണ്ടത്രെ. ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടിന്റെ ആലോചനകുറവുകൊണ്ടും ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടിന്റെ കഴിവില്ലായ്മയുടേയും, അപ്രാപ്തിയുടേയും ഫലമായിട്ടോ, അഥവാ, മറെറന്തുതന്നെയായിരുന്നാലും വിരോധമില്ലാ, ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു ശേഖരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങൾ ജനങ്ങൾക്കു് ഉപയോഗിക്കുവാൻ വയ്യാതായിട്ടുള്ളതു് അവരെകൊണ്ടു് നിർബ്ബന്ധിച്ചു് മേടിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടു് എന്നുള്ളതു നിശ്ചയമായും ഒരു വലിയ തെറ്റാണു്.

Mr. President: Order, order. The Hon'ble Member has already been in possession of the House for ten minutes this morning. I do not know how long he was speaking yesterday afternoon. I would remind the Hon'ble Member that there is a time limit of ten minutes. I must ask the Hon'ble Member to wind up his speech as quickly as possible.

Mr. P. Narayana Menon *(Trippunittura)*: Only three minutes. നെല്ലെടുപ്പിനെക്കുറിച്ചും, ഭക്ഷണസാധനങ്ങൾ വിതരണം ചെയ്യുന്നതിനെക്കുറിച്ചും മാത്രമേ ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടിന്റെ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ പെടുത്തുവാനുള്ളൂ. ഇനി മറെറാരു സംഗതി പറയുവാനുള്ളതു് മണ്ണെണ്ണ, പാൽ ഇവയെക്കുറിച്ചാണു്.

മണ്ണെണ്ണ ഇപ്പോൾ വിതരണം ചെയ്യുന്നതു് എലക്ട്രിക്സിറ്റിയില്ലാത്ത വീടുകളിലേക്കു മുക്കാൽ കുപ്പി വീതമാണു കൊടുക്കുന്നതു്. ഇതുകൊണ്ടു അവരുടെ ആവശ്യം ഒട്ടുംതന്നെ നടക്കുമെന്നു തോന്നുന്നില്ല. ഈ കായ്യത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു പ്രത്യേകം ഒന്നാലോചിക്കേണ്ടതാണു്.

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ഇങ്ങിനെ പല ആവശ്യങ്ങളും പറഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടുള്ള അളകൾ പലതുമുണ്ടായേക്കാമെങ്കിലും ഇതു് കൂടുതൽ കൊടുക്കുന്ന കാര്യത്തിൽ ഒട്ടുംതന്നെ അമാന്തം വിചാരിക്കുവാൻ പാടുള്ളതല്ല.

പിന്നെ വേറെയൊന്നു പാലിനെസംബന്ധിച്ചാണു്. പാൽ ഇപ്പോൾ കിട്ടാൻ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടാണു്. ഉള്ളതെല്ലാം ഏതുവഴിക്കാണു ചിലവാകുന്നതെന്നു് അറിഞ്ഞുകൂടാ. പാലിന്റെ ന്യൂനതയെ പരിഹരിക്കുവാനായി പാൽപ്പൊടിയെന്നു പറയുന്ന ഒരു സാധനം ഗവമ്മെണ്ടു് എവിടെനിന്നോ സമ്പാദിച്ചു് അതു സാധാരണയായിട്ടു കലക്കികൊടുക്കുവാൻ ഏർപ്പാടു ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ടു്. ഈ കലക്കികൊടുക്കുന്ന സമ്പ്രദായം കാണുമ്പോൾ സെൻട്രൽ ഫാമത്തിൽ പശുക്കൾക്കു വെള്ളവും തവിടും കലക്കികൊടുക്കുന്ന ഓർമ്മയാണു വരുന്നതു്. ഇതു കുട്ടികൾക്കും ഗർഭിണികൾക്കുമാണു കൊടുക്കുന്നതു്. നിവൃത്തിയുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഇതു അവരാതു് അളകൾക്കു കോട്ടയന്നസരിച്ചു വിതരണം ചെയ്യുകയാണു നല്ലതെന്നു ഞാൻ വിചാരിക്കുന്നു. പാൽപൊടിയായിട്ടതന്നെ കൊടുത്താൽ അതു കുട്ടികൾക്കുതന്നെ കൊടുക്കുമോയെന്നു ഗവമ്മെണ്ടിന്നു സംശയിക്കേണ്ടതായ ആവശ്യമില്ല. കുട്ടികളോടു ഗവമ്മെണ്ടിനേക്കാൾ കൂടുതൽ സ്നേഹം അവരുടെ മാതാപിതാക്കന്മാർക്കായിരിക്കും. ഇതു കുട്ടികൾക്കു കൊടുക്കാതെ മറ്റൊരുതരത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗിക്കുമെന്നു വിചാരിക്കുന്നതു തീരെ തെറ്റാണു്. ഈ കാര്യത്തിൽ നിശ്ചയമായിട്ടും മാതാപിതാക്കന്മാർക്കായിരിക്കും കുട്ടികളോടു കൂടുതൽ സ്നേഹം ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുക. കുട്ടികൾക്കും ഗർഭിണികൾക്കുമായി കൊടുക്കുവാൻ ഗവമ്മെണ്ടു് എങ്ങിനെയൊ സമ്പാദിച്ചതായ ഈ പാൽപൊടി ഓരോരുത്തർക്കും കോട്ടയന്നസരിച്ചു് അതാതു സ്ഥലത്തുള്ള അളകളെത്തന്നെ ഏല്പിക്കുകയായിരിക്കും നല്ലതു്. അതല്ലാതെകണ്ടു് പട്ടുക്കൾക്കു വെള്ളം കലക്കികൊടുക്കുന്നതുപോലെ കൊടുക്കാതിരിക്കുകയാണു് ഉത്തമമെന്നു ഞാൻ പറയുന്നു. ഇങ്ങിനെയുള്ള ഓരോ സംഗതികളും ഗവമ്മെണ്ടിന്റെ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരണമെന്നുള്ളതാണു് എന്റെ ഉദ്ദേശം. ആയതുകൊണ്ടു മുൻപറഞ്ഞ കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഗവമ്മെണ്ടു ഗാഢമായി ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുമെന്നുള്ള വിശ്വാസത്തോടുകൂടി എന്റെ ഈ പ്രസംഗത്തെ അവസാനിപ്പിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

***Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar** *(Nellayi)*: Sir, I do not think I need dilate upon the points already mentioned by many of the Hon'ble Members. But there are a few points of very great importance which deserve the immediate and earnest consideration of the Government. I shall deal with them as briefly as possible.

Sir, firstly I have got a complaint that the Food Department has absolutely failed to keep up the assurance given by the Government that the number of fair price shops will be gradually and progressively diminished. The contention now, Sir, is that after 2 years of intensive control and education of the people that prices have been controlled they have ceased to perform any useful purpose unless it be to provide jobs for the people. As you are already aware, Sir, practically in all areas of the Cochin State there are shops which cater to the needs of the people and some of them have been given licences to all articles introduced in the State by Government. Now, if these shops under the efficient supervision of the Food Department are functioning alright I do not see any reason why the costly Government-run shops are not totally abolished, their places being taken up by other licensed dealers who can be called upon to furnish adequate security for the proper and honest discharge of their duties. This will have a two-fold effect, firstly encouraging the local trading public to carry on this normal avocations and secondly freeing the Government from the necessity of having an elaborate staff by way of management, checking the management, controlling the checking of the management and directing the checking of the control of the management.

Secondly, Sir, I cannot understand this intense reluctance on the part of the Government to accept rice in place of paddy. If the motive is to enrich a few select mill-owners, then I have no grievance whatsoever. But this intention of the Government should be specified and made clear and should not be clothed under a mass of verbiage normally indulged in by the Food Department as arguments against this policy. Why I advocate this departure from the avowed policy of the Government is this, Sir—it secures to the land owner and cultivator the margin in which now goes to the mill-owner thereby compensating to some extent the very high cost of cultivation. At the same time it might in the local areas provide work for the rural population and ensure a good supply of good hand—pounded rice which has got a high nutritional value.

* Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Thirdly, Sir, I have got to stress the extreme delay in the matter of issue of permits from Taluk to Taluk. Now, Sir, it is very easy for the Food Department to very easily glibly reply that as far as possible delays are avoided. The contention is that in no single solitary instance should there be a moment's delay for it is a matter of food. My suggestion in this connection is that instead of entrusting this work to the already over-worked officers of the Department, it is better to have a special staff called the "issue permitting staff"—I mean the permit issuing staff who can do this very promptly obviating all hardships. In this connection an instance of unconscionable delay may be cited. One Mr. Sivaramakrishna Ayyar, an Advocate practising in Trichur, had applied for a permit for the transport of rice from his home at Chittur for his bonafide domestic consumption. For full two months he was not given the same because of the necessary investigation, in the language of the Department. Similar instances can be mentioned, that would only take the time of the House.

Fourthly, Sir, the selection of officers for the commandeering of Paddy is a matter which has been absolutely neglected by Government. The fact that a man is honest should not be the sole criterion. He should be a man who has got an idea of what agriculture means and who has got the advantage of not only being in Government Service, but also of knowing what the world is. Sir, tact is not a disqualification for commandeering purposes and your showing a high figure of collection does not mean that your collection was by lawful method. Collection of paddy, Sir, is not by threatening to bite one's nose if the demanded quantity is not immediately measured out, but by persuading the party to obey the mandates of the Law. I cannot expatiate further on this point without mentioning the names of either of officials or those of my friends who have been threatened by these honest fighting officials.

Fifthly, Sir, in the matter of the rice Purchasing Officers a new policy ought to be adopted by Government. When the system was first enunciated the selection of officers seem to be from among classes who did not know what rice meant unless placed before them in a cooked form. The names of the first few selected may be referred to by you to establish this contention of mine. This originally incorrect policy was very happily made more incorrect by recalling a man as soon as he has studied the subject fairly thoroughly as putting a fresher there. Sir, are the subjects of His Highness the Maharaja to be made the victims of this sort of the educational policy of the Food Department? This is a matter which even without my mentioning ought to have occured to the Government long, long before and had a policy of entrusting the purchase to persons who knew what they were doing a very large part of the criticisms on the ground of the bad quality of rice could have been avoided as also the internal misery of the subjects of the State.

Sixthly, Sir, it has already been eloquently argued by Mr. Walmsley that in the interests of Grow More Food Campaign it is high time for the Government to come forward with a policy of subsidising the poor cultivator. There is no meaning at all in saying that manure depots have been opened all over the State and manure is being supplied at 25 per cent less than the cost price of the Government. When the price of manure has gone up 300 per cent a 25 per cent cut therefrom is not going to materially help the cultivator. The cost of every necessaries of life have gone up 3 fold in almost every case so that the available surplus of the cultivator for improvement of his agricultural operations is now at a very constant "Zero." Therefore in the absence of tangible help in the way of subsidy no amount of propaganda is going to improve the indegenous production of food materials, I mean food materials which are eatable and not materials which being normally uneatable are made eatable by drastic provision of law.

And finally, Sir, the importance of issuing the ration as paddy wherever possible can never be over-stressed. The rural people have been accustomed to having a small quantity of paddy for their normal requirements and the issue of paddy ration will be in no way a novalty or trouble for them. On the other hand they will be distinctly profited because the by-products such as chaff and bran, which are now almost un-obtainable, will be available to them for all sorts of uses at the same time if paddy concerned is stocked in the localities from which it is commandeered it will save the Government a vast amount by way of transport charges. In this connection, I defenitely assert, that in the matter of transport of rice commandeered from the Talappalli Taluk alone the Government has been able to effect a saving of 1·5 lakhs of rupees. All this savings can be utilised to issue cheap rice or subsides to the cultivator.

Before closing, I wouldraw the attention of the Government, to the extremely impure salt that is now being supplied at considerably enhanced rates. The Government might argue that the price of salt has not been enhanced but only the price of sand and mud added to the salt.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

But, Sir, the Commissioner has been accustomed to use salt and does not want to use the other additions enforced by Government and, Sir, I must say that there is a general impression in the country that the present wide-spread skin trouble is a result of the use of this impure salt.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu (*Kunnamkulam*): Mr. President, Sir.— I hope the Government is aware that the remarks of the Hon'ble Members of this House have been insisting upon the distribution of food rations in the case of paddy as paddy and not by converting the same into rice. I also support that idea, but the Government must take sufficient precautions and it will not be even undesirable to have one person appointed in all the Government Fair Price Shops specially to see that those who purchase paddy get paddy without chaff. Chaff ought to be removed. Otherwise the result will be that the poor people will suffer. In the case of weekly ration cards paddy can be given and this will not be, although it may be a bit expensive, a thing which cannot be made a possibility. Of course, our Food Department has not worked at a loss as in Travancore and even the price of paddy sold from the Fair Price Shops or even the licensed shops may be increased sufficiently high, say by one anna or half an anna, so that the people may have the chance to get the chaff removed out of paddy and purchase it.

The next factor which has been brought very strongly to the notice of the Government is about the quality of rice sold from licensed shops and Fair Price Shops. The quality of rice is worse in the southern area especially in the Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk than any other areas in Cochin State. That is my personal opinion. The Hon'ble Member for Trippunithura and other memebers of the Southern Taluks had been bringing this to the notice of the Government most pointedly because the quality of rice brought here is worse than the quality of rice given in the Northern Taluks, I may with gratification submit that the quality of rice got in the Northern Taluks are even better than the quality of rice got in Fair Price Shops in the bordering British Territory. But that does not mean that the people in the Southern Area should get bad rice. This ought to be brought to the special notice of the Food Department and the reason for such bad rice coming to this area have also to be investigated and the defect remedied. It seems that the Government is not now justified in not having found out the total quantity of pulses needed for the whole State. In the earlier stages of the Food Supplies Department, of course, the Departmental Head or some of his immediate subordinates or even still lower officers might not have had the opportunity of being traders. Now they have sufficient experience of being traders and in the commercial line they might have got some experience and they might have sufficient figures to find the quantity of pulses needed for the whole of the State. As far as my information goes from the information I get from outside villages from almost all the bordering villages, pulses are smuggled out of the State and the value of pulses in the nighbouring British and Travancore territory also ought to be comparatively the same in the bordering villages of our State as in the other places outside Cochin. Taking my own personal experience my impression and my knowledge is that the Ponnani Taluk north of Talappalli Taluk, and west of Talappalli Taluk, the price of pulses is higher than in our State with the result that many of the Fair Price Shop and licensed shop-keepers made capital out of it and large quantities of pulses are being smuggled out of the State and our people sometimes do not get pulses.

Several members have raised the point that wheat need not be given at all to people. I entirely disagree and the matter of compulsion made by the Government is a necessity. But the wheat must be good wheat and the wheat must be cheap. I have myself noted very recently very bad wheat, wheat in which there are worms also, is being given to the licensed shops. There was a case in Kunnamkulam and the shop-keeper was a respectable and an honest man and a graduate also. On further enquiry I have known that several cases like that exist. The reason for that also is the Government has not yet or rather the Department has not yet found out of the total quantity of wheat necessary for the State and the distribution for the different Depots in different Taluk areas has not been practically got about in a sort of a methodical way. So I think it is highly necessary that the officers of the Health Department and the Director of Public Health ought to be given special powers to go and inspect all these shops where food materials are being sold and report to the Government and also condemn certain food articles which are not fit for human consumption. The Government seem to have sold recently in auction a large quantity of wheat which was unfit for human consumption. The reason for selling this at bargain price is because of the want of knowledge of the Government in getting sufficient quantities and the conservatism of the Government in not selling the wheat at a still lower rate and seeing that the whole thing is consumed by the people. I also ask the

* Speech not correct by the Hon'ble Member.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Government whether all this wheat which has been sold as being unless for human consumption has not been adulterated with the other wheat sold by these Fair Price Shop-keepers or licensed shop-keepers. If useless wheat is being auctioned there is every possibility of bringing it in the adulterated form along with the good wheat and again being sent out for human consumption. So the wheat that is found to be unfit for human consumption ought to be destroyed. Any food material which is unfit for human consumption ought to be destroyed and not sold in auction because there is a chance of its being adulterated with other food. Some members were saying that the people need be given only the minimum quantity of rice and not the wheat. This does not hold good. I think the health of the people will considerably improve if people are made to eat wheat and in addition to rice, wheat. ought to be given. I am myself an example of that, (*Laughter*). I was not keeping as much good health as I am now having four years back. I began to eat wheat, not because of rice scarcity—one or two years before Burma was invaded, at least one meal should be wheat. That is my personal experience. Our people must be made to eat wheat at least once a day.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon *(Chittur-Rural):* Do you get wheat from anywhere else ?

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* Wherefrom am I to get wheat except from the Government depot?

There have been several complaints against the Grain Purchasing Staff. Of course, I don't say all the Grain Purchasing Officers are very undesirable sort of people or tactless people or worthless or corrupt people. There may be such people among them. But one thing I can say. The Tahsildars who are in charge of the Grain Purchasing Section have been doing very good work and however honest and efficient they are they will have to incur the displeasure of many and even of M.L.Cs. I know the case of the Grain Purchasing Tahsildar of Trichur who has got entangled in a fight with a close relation of one of our colleagues here. He did not give way and at last he did the right thing. The very same Tahsildar seems to have fought out with a newspaper editor and cries of calumny anything other than corruption were raised against him. He has been decried as a tiger, or a hyanna or a wolf. It appears that the Director of Food Supplies pats some of these newspaper editors. There is nothing to be taken action for in such writings. But the people will think, those who read the newspapers will think that such officers are very undesirable rascals. In fact they have to use tact, I admit. But at the same time they should be strong enough. They should not be carried away by M L.Cs. or big land-lords or newspaper editors or even big Government Officers. So the task of these Grain Purchasing Tahsildars is arduous, more arduous than that of the Food Supply Director's. It is an appointment which can be said to be the most important appointment and probably a Grain Purchasing Officer can at least get 1,000 or 1,500 rupees if he takes only "mamools".

Mr. K. Narayana Menon *(Mulakunnathukavu):* Is there any schedule of "mamoools" ?

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* As far as the high officers are concerned there is no schedule, but probably there might be a schedule for Parvathiams and Menons. I appreciate there is the control of the Tahsildars. That is why I say that their pay should be revised. It is mainly the character of the persons concerned that has to be considered even if he is a little bit tactless, that does not matter.

As far as the milk distribution is concerned the Hon'ble Member for Trippunittura has detailed some defects. If there are such things they ought to be stopped. I have been also taking keen interest in milk distribution and wherever I go I used to give milk to the children. I have visited several centres in the State where milk is being distributed. I may say that in the Local Y.W.C.A. Centre I have seen girls being taught music, dancing, etc., and after that the girls go away. I saw only 10 or 12 days back milk being distributed by Mrs. Puduval, wife of late Dr. Puduval. She was practically like an Angel engaged in doing that humanitarian work. She was herself rubbing the pots and mixing the milk herself and distributing it to the children. If such Hon'ble workers who want to do real service have been entrusted with the task of distribution, I don't think, there will be any complaint. I don't think that much of the milk powder is being smuggled. I think in Ernakulam under the leadership of the Hon'ble Member for Ernakulam, milk distribution is going on highly satisfactorily. So far as the centres under him are concerned he has direct supervision over them. I request the Hon'ble Members of this House that they will be good enough so far as it lies in their power to look into the milk distribution centres of the State and see that our future generation gets good milk. The opinion expressed that the milk may be given to the people in the form of the powder is not desirable. Most of these people are poor people and there are rich people or the higher classes who will like to get milk powder. A few months ago I asked in this House whether the Government

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

could supply milk powder to the people as there is scarcity for milk. The poor people will sell milk to those who are prepared to buy it. So it is better that powder is not given. The powder may be mixed and the children asked to drink and go.

The most important and probably the last point that I have to deal with is about tapioca powder. I think our Government have convinced the Government of India that we have not got sufficient food materials and they expect that sufficient food materials are going to come from outside the State. Of course, for an interim period when there was necessity to tide over the difficulty we had this tapioca cultivation. Now it is time, I think, to use it for commercial purposes also. The Government will be well-advised to see to it so that the tapioca is not wasted and the agriculturist is not put to any trouble. A liberal policy has to be pursued.

I seek the indulgence of this House to one more point because I may not be able to move my resolution No. 39. That resolution deals only with the subject. I am not going to move that. The poor people may not be able to purchase the daily ration every day. One may be able to purchase ration for 4 annas on one day, he may be able to spare 6 or 8 annas the next day; if he has 6 annas worth of ration every day he may not be able to purchase the whole ration on the first day, but he cannot purchase the remaining portion the next day. So that much of food material is left unsold. This gives an opportunity for the Fair Price Shop-keepers as well as the licensed shop-keepers to sell it in the black-market. So, what I wish to bring to the notice of the Government is this : They may be given at least time for 7 days together to finish their whole ration. If one has ration for 6 annas and he buys the ration only for 4 annas on one day, and he brings 8 annas the next day he may be given ration for 8 annas on that day. So the quantity due to that particular family for a period of 7 days or a week must be given to them in small quantitiesor part by part. Even they may be allowed to purchase twice a day if they have sufficient funds. So the family gets the whole ration and this will not give the Fair Price Shop-keepers or licenseds hop-keepers the temptation to resort to black-marketing.

***Mr. K. M. Ibrahim** *(Cranganur)* : The most predominating note in the various attempts put forward from the various sections has been to my humble mind that a liberal policy of subsidy should be meted out to the agriculturists especially those who remain on the subsistence line, that the price of rations should be reduced and that the quality of the rations that is being supplied improved. Especially on this point of subsidy to the agriculturists, Sir, I would submit that perhaps there may not be occasion to actually dole out money to the agriculturists. The mere fact of giving a better price to the paddy of the agriculturist, especially from the agriculturists on the subsistence line, coupled with a slight decrease in the rations that is being distributed to the labouring millions, that itself may come to a kind of subsidy. It is very well known that the price of the paddy is now just not more than three times than what it was in the pre-war conditions, while we all know that the cost of living is never on this side of five times. It is a decided fact that it is nowhere above 5 times of the pre-war standard of life which we all in common and especially the agriculturists are leading. In that case, it is up to the Government to think how is it possible for these millions of poor agriculturists to make both ends meet. The fact that without State help, they will be put to utter starvation is a self-evident fact. So my submission is, just increase the price of paddy. But by that expediency, there should not be a complaint that the price of the ration should be increased. From the stand point of the majority of the public, perhaps the question may be whether by increasing the price of the paddy that is being commandeered by the Government, they have to pay a higher price for the rations that they get. Now, my submission is pay more price to the paddy and then reduce the price of the rice as far as possible. By this, it will be an indirect method of subsidising the agriculturists of the land.

There has been a complaint, Sir, from some quarters ventilated on the floor of this House that a kind of official imperiousness—is being experienced in the Fair Price Shops and from some other low servants, who have to deal with the public at large, both in the selling of these rations and in the commandeering of paddy. What I submit is that this distribution of rations and the commandeering of paddy is more a merchant's work than a Police work. And in the day to day dealings of these officers with the public, the extreme politeness which is required of a typical merchant is essential for the happy working of the scheme. But that is not a fundamental flaw of the system; a few strict directions from the Government to these subordinate officers will mend these matters in no time.

*Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

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What I submit before the House that one of our most important grievance is that this department is a profit-bringing department. According to some of us, Sir, it should never be. Nowadays, Sir, what we learn from journals and papers of things that happen in England and some of the Western Countries, the Supply Department is never a profit-making department. Even in our neighbouring State of Travancore, it is a loss-creating department. My submission is that the Rs. 14,000, which was alleged on the floor of the House to be the net profit meeting all the expenses of the administration of this department, at least this Rs. 14,000 without being spent should have been used in decreasing the price of ration and giving more price to the commandeering paddy. Our case is that even the establishment charges of the whole department cannot be met from the funds of this department. It must be taken from the general revenues of the country. If it is taken from the general revenues of the country, that will enable the Government to decrease the prices of the rations and increase the price of the Commandeered paddy. Even so far as the question of the subsidy is concerned, perhaps on the face of it the Government may feel that it is a very wide thing with very high financial commitments. My submission to that point is that there need not be a general cut and dry subsidising process. It may a graded scale. Those who deserve it most may be given most. There may be big jenmies in whose case there may be a graded kind of subsidy that is being meted out by the Government. My submission is those who are on the starvation line, those who are on the subsistence line may be given more and they may be given preference in the case of these subsidies by the Government. The points that have been brought to the kind notice of the Government by the various Hon'ble Members of this House who have taken unusual interest in the matter, by themselves show how vital the matter is and how important the public considers it to be. It is all the more important for the Government to see that the home-front should be strengthened to see that the actual front is actually strengthened, without the home front made strong, we will not be able to make the actual front strong. The extreme sympathy and anxiety should be bestowed by the Government in this matter. With this appeal, I conclude.

(The House rose for lunch at 1-32 p.m. and re-assembled at 2-30 p.m. with the Hon'ble President in the Chair)

Mr. K. T. Achyutan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli)*: Sir, I am aware that I will have to repeat what many other Hon'ble Members have stated on the food question. Even then, many of these points are so very important points that the Government will see that all these defects are remedied and the improvements suggested by the Hon'ble Members are made.

The first point I want to impress is about the wheat question. I am surprised why so many Hon'ble Members of this House have repeatedly stated that they do not want compulsory wheat ration. When we are aware that the home production of rice is insufficient to meet our minimum requirements, I do not know why the Hon'ble Members say that we do not require any compulsory wheat ration in the State. Even medical opinion says that wheat is a nutruitive food, which has got great nutruitive value, which may not containe in rice. So it must be our duty to see that the people take wheat as food at least once a day. My opinion is that the Government must take all available opportunities to propagate the consumption of wheat in whatever form available and see that the compulsory ration at present allotted must be increased to some extent more. I know that the rich jenmies and the big land-owners may not have the necessity of taking the wheat ration, but my point is that they must be compelled to give at least a portion of the paddy that is allowed to them and compelled to purchase portion of the wheat. They could make the best use of the wheat because they are rich people, they can mix it with ghee, milk and prepare delicious and relishing dishes out of it. That is my most important point. Even the Government officers, high Government officers, I think may not be taking this wheat. The Government must see that the high Government officials are compelled to purchase wheat, see that they consume wheat and propagate the opinion that wheat well-prepared is a nutruitious, nourishing and healthy food. But there is the objection that the price of wheat is at present high—that is 4 annas per edangazhi. We were agitating in the Food Advisory Council that the price of wheat should be reduced. I say, the price should be reduced, not to 3 annas from 4 annas, but to 2 annas, so that the people might have the temptation to purchase as much wheat as possible. We have got now a large quantity of wheat at our disposal. The price is high and so the sale is limited. Compulsory ration of wheat for two days may be introduced and at the same time the price of wheat should be reduced, I think, to 2 annas per edangazhi. Then we will have the satisfaction that people who will be purchasing larger quantities of wheat will get accustomed to wheat eating, not at this time only, but in future also.

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As regards paddy, it has been unanimously said in this House that the paddy should be sold as far as possible in kind. I think the Government will not have any serious objection. I admit that there may be some inconvenience in introducing that measure, but the Government must see that as far as weekly card-holders are concerned, they are given the ration as paddy. The Government may even take figures from the retail shops as to how many of the card-holders wish to have their ration issued as paddy, and the quantity required for them may be reserved there. Suppose out of 300 card-holders, 200 say "we will be satisfied to receive paddy". Then Government can understand what quantity of paddy is required and distribute it in the retail shops. There will not be much objection and the people can be satisfied in that respect also.

Another point I want to emphasise is that much more paddy should be produced in Cochin State. We are aware that the Agricultural Department and the Food Supplies Department and the Minister are trying their level best to increase production. My opinion is that manure should be given free to paddy cultivators. I do not say that it will be possible to give it free. At least a considerable portion of this manure must be given to the cultivators of paddy alone for the time being. The Government should see that it is given in sufficiently large quantities to the actual cultivators of paddy, so that there will be the satisfaction that what we lose in giving manure free will be amply compensated by the production of more paddy. I think the Government must bestow their serious consideration on this question. At least in one or two villages selected for the purpose, the Government will supply this manure at least at a subsidy of 50 per cent and see how much more of paddy will be got from those villages.

Another thing I want to speak on is about kerosene. There is a complaint, especially in rural areas, that kerosene is not supplied in sufficient quantity. I am told that the Government of India has cut down the kerosene quota to the State. You must agitate and try to get more quota for the State. If it is a fact that the quota has been cut, I must strongly blame the Government for that. Whether it has taken place or not, I am not sure. The Government must try to get more and more of kerosene and distribute it on a more liberal scale to the people, especially the poor.

One more point which has been enunciated by the Hon'ble Member for Mukundapuram Ezhuvas is about the insurance of godowns. It is a serious matter. I do not know whether the officers of the Government of India, Food Department who visited the State considered this matter. At least the Government must consider the point to ensure that the stuffs that are stored here in Cochin, Ernakulam and other places are protected by sufficient insurance. It will be a very serious loss if some accident happens. We will lose not only the stuffs, but also the money which is the cost of it. We will lose the food-stuffs, that by itself is a loss, and why should we also incur the loss of the cost of it. The Government should consider that aspect also.

Another thing is that the merchant class must not be allowed to conduct the purchases, etc., and their advice must be taken in the question of purchase of stocks from outside Cochin. What I think is that the merchants should voluntarily give the Government the personal information that they have. I think the Government will be ready and willing to receive any advice given properly by these big merchants of Cochin, I mean, the merchants of Mattancheri and other places. What is the difficulty for them to say that such and such things are there and also that the methods of purchase are such and such and you must go on such and such a line, etc., so that the Government will be in a very able position to purchase those things there. I cannot see why they should get the right for themselves to transport thsse things. I think the Government must not give way to these things. It is the duty of the Government to see that they themselves do this in an efficient way. The Government have got sufficient experience now. They must take care to see that they seek the advice of these well-intentioned merchants and see that the commodities are brought to Cochin State without loss and delay. I say that the Government should not lag behind in seeing that the suggestions made in the House are taken into account and put into operation as early as possible. With these words, I conclude.

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies):* Mr. President, Sir, I welcome the opportunity offered to the House by the mover, the Hon'ble Member of Wadakkancheri for this discussion on the food position in the State. I am thankful to the Hon'ble Member and several other Members who spoke on the motion for the various helpful suggestions thrown out and criticisms made in the course of the debate. It is a well-known fact to the House that the Government have been ready in acting upon the suggestions and criticisms made on the floor of this House in the administration of food matters. I assure the House that the Government will bestow

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the most careful attention to the suggestions and criticisms made during the discussions on these motions and give effect to them wherever possible and that without avoidable delay. Within the limited time at my disposal it may not be possible for me to reply to all of them. Some of them have already been answered in the course of the discussions in this meeting itself. I shall confine myself here to our main problems.

The food position in the State has, I am glad to inform the House, improved since the House met last which was 4 months ago. The scale of our ration then in force was 12 ozs. of food-grains, which was made up as follows.—

8 ozs. rice plus 4 ozs. wheat per adult per day for 20 days
12 ozs. wheat " " 7 "
12 ozs. wheat or dry grains " for the remaining days in the month

There was not much complaint about the total quantity of ration from the people, but there was a loud demand for increasing the rice ration, which admittedly was very meagre. The complaint was real in view of the habits of the people of the State. As a result of the increased supplies of rice, we have subsequently increased the scale of rice ration. From 11th October 1944, eight ounces of rice was issued for 24 days in the month. It was again raised to 8 ozs. of rice for 28 days in a month with effect from 16th November 1944. Government hope that it will be possible in the immediate future to give 8 ozs. of rice on all days in the month.

It may be mentioned here that Government are aware of the fact that the above increases do not go to fully satisfy the standard requirements of the people. Every possible effort is being made to obtain larger supplies of rice from outside so as to still further increase the ration. I would like to take this opportunity to express our grateful thanks to the Government of India for rendering us all possible facilities to obtain adequate stocks in order to increase our ration. We are also very grateful to Mr. H. J. Todd, who was till recently with us as the Resident for the Madras States and Diwan Bahadur C. P. Karunakara Menon, our Regional Food Commissioner, for rendering the great help in this matter. They have repeatedly placed our case strongly before the Government of India and made untiring efforts to see tate our quotas of rice are increased and larger supplies are made to us in time. The State, of late, had also the opportunity of receiving several distinguished visitors who are connected with the Food Department of the Government of India and Great Britain, who studied our food problems at close quarters and were able to see for themselves the humble attempts we have made to meet the situation. This has enabled them to fully appreciate our difficulties and our needs, with the result that the Central Government is now keenly alive to the necessity of placing larger stocks of rice at our disposal and that too at the cheapest possible rates. Among these distinguished visiters, I may mention the names of the Hon'ble Sir Edward Benthal, War Transport Member to the Government of India, Hon'ble Mr. Somerset Butler, Special Officer to the Government of India, Hon'ble Sir Srivastava, Food Member of the Government of India, Sir Henry French of the Ministry of Food, United Kingdom and Hon'ble Mr. Sen, Director-General of Food of the Government of India. They were impressed with the magnitude of the difficulties the State had in facing an acute food crisis, the vigorous bold steps taken by this Government to tide over the situation and the successful results achieved thereby avoiding the calamities which be fell some other parts of India placed under similar circumstances. Both the Hon'ble Sir Srivastava and Hon'ble Mr. Sen studied our problems closely and took prompt action to augment our rice stocks.

Our acute scarcity is for rice and this is our burning question.

Supplies of rice.—Supplies from outside as per quota allotted by the Central Government and (2) Local purchases under the Grain Purchase Scheme.

Supplies from outside.—: The allotments of rice by the Central Government are generally for the khariff year. The allotment for the last khariff plan year was for the period from November 1943 to 31st October, 1944. The total allotment of rice was originally only about 40,000 tons. This was, as a result of repeated representations, subsequently increased to 53,277·8 tons. When the above khariff year ended, we had still to move about 20,000 tons. The main reason for this large balance is transport difficulty. I have already explained it to this House on a previous occasion. It is due to (i) want of shipping space and (ii) inadequate wagon facilities. The shipping and railway authorities have shown special considerations to us in meeting our demands. But they have not been adequate to enable us to transport all our quotas. The unfortunate fire accident in Bombay and the floods in Sind created difficulties in the way of the authorities to give us enough shipping and wagon space. The Central Government have taken note of the above difficulties and they have decided that the balance quota should not lapse

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but that we should be allowed to move it and add the same to our quota for the current khariff year, *i.e.*, from November 1944 to November 1945. With greater facilities rendered in the matter of transport we are not able to move larger stocks from Karachi through which place most of our balance quota has to come. For the present khariff year, we have been given a quota of 40,000 tons of rice. This with a carry over of the balance quota of 20,000 tons will make a total of 60,000 tons of rice for the current khariff year. It may, thus be seen that we have secured for this year a larger quota than that of last year.

Local Purchases.—The total acreage under paddy cultivation at the time when the supplies from Burma were cut off, was a little below 3 lakhs acres. As a result of the intensive food production drive undertaken by the State (with the Co-operation of the National War Front orgainisation of the State) it has been possible to increase the extent of paddy cultivation which is now about 2,05,000 acres, of which about 5,000 acres are hilly tracts cleared for cultivation under the Hill Paddy Scheme. This result was achieved by rendering various concessions to the cultivators to induce them to take to paddy cultivation, wherever possible, and by providing increased facilities for irrigation, etc. During last year we purchased about 54,00,000 paras of paddy (about 27,000 tons in rice) as against about 32,00,000 paras of paddy (about 16,000 tons in rice) in 1118. The purchase in 1119 would have been larger but for the damage sustained by the several crops which have been explained by me to this House during the Budget Session. As the Hon'ble Members are aware, there was a great failure of the South-west monsoon towards the close of 1119. This has seriously affected both our September crop and also the coming January crop. Our virippu crop which has just been purchased had sustained damage to the extent of about 30 per cent. We have already purchased this year about 20,00,000 paras of paddy (about 10,000 tons in rice.) It is feared that the damage to the January crop may go up to about 40 per cent. I may, however, assure the House that no effort will be spared to procure all available surplus paddy with the cultivators for distribution under the rationing scheme. I may here state that it has been found necessary to tighten up a bit the restrictions regarding the movement of paddy from place to place within the State. The grain purchase Tahsildar have now been given the power to restrict transport of paddy and rice within specified areas in their respective jurisdictions. This was done with a view to facilitate detection of fraudulent dealings in paddy by frequent checks of the sources from which they proceed and their destination. Government are not unaware of the difficulties caused to the ordinary citizen consequent on such restrictions. But strict instructions have been given to the subordinate officers to avoid unnecessary incoveniences or hardships to the public and special care is taken to see that they do not misuse their powers.

Price of paddy.—The complaint is that the purchase of paddy is not adequate. This question has repeatedly come before the house and was discussed at length in the Budget Sessions. The conditions which have a bearings in this issue have not materially changed. Government have always given, and will continue to give the most anxious consideration to this matter. Government do not think, from the materials now available, that there is a case for an immediate revision of the existing rate, *viz.*, Rs. 1—6—0 per para. It may here be noted that the price fixed by use approximate to the prevailing rates in Travancore and British Malabar.

It seems almost conceded that it is only the actual cultivator who has a greivance in this matter. His case was strongly pressed in the House by some of the Hon'ble Members. It is suggested that he should be given a subsidy to make it profitable or to induce him to till the land as there is little margining of profit for him owing to the increased cost of cultivation. The suggestion to give a subsidy to the actual cultivator to encourage production of paddy is, no doubt, very attractive but it bristles with practical difficulties. The mode of subsidy indicated is by way of contribution in money or by increased price for the paddy purchased from them. In either case, there is wide scope for fraud. Attempts are sure to be made by non-cultivating land-lords to come within the category of actual cultivators in collusion with their tenants who are always amenable to their control or who may choose to collude for the sake of monetary consideration. It may also give room for an unhealthy increase in the number of bogus varam tenures, thereby increasing the number of so-called land-lords. This would not only prevent the subsidy reaching those who deserve it but also go to reduce the surplus paddy available for purchase under the procurement scheme consequent on the increase in the number of the actual cultivators. Any investigation by the Grain Purchase Officers to detect the fraud in this matter will be difficult, involve unnecessary delay and hence impede our purchase work. The only feasible form of subsidy will be the supply of agricultural implements or manure, etc. at heavily subsidised rates. This is already

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being done by the Agricultural Department in the case of fertilisers. Agricultural implements are being arranged to be supplied to the agriculturists at cheap rates. It was pointed out by one of the Hon'ble Members that, in some particular areas the cost of cultivation in some cases has gone up to the high figures of Rs. 3 per para due to peculiar circumstances. Hence it was suggested that in such areas at least a special subsidy may be given. It remains to be known whether such experience is common to all the cultivators of the area concerned. It is, however, very difficult to judge where these particular areas are and whether the cultivator himself was not at fault in attempting cultivation in the wrong place or with the wrong type of seed or like causes. These matters will require careful investigation by the Revenue Department. In deserving cases where large areas are adversely affected by vicissitudes of season, as in the case of the kole crop of 1118, Government have thought it fit to give part or whole remission of Land Revenue and also to render help in other forms, for instance, by arranging for the pumping in those areas. Government have also been spending large amounts of money to improve existing major irrigation systems and also to initiate new schemes. All these should be construed as indirect subsidy to the cultivator. The danger of subsidy in the form of money direct is obvious. Even agricultural loans are sometimes not utilised for agricultural purposes. The chance of outright money gifts being misused is certainly greater. So the subsidy if at all, has to be either a general one to all cultivators or in the form of essential articles needed for cultivation at reduced prices.

Procurement from Land-Lords—There is then the allegation that all the available surplus from the land-lords are not purchased. This statement is not correct. It may be mentioned for the information of this House that the majority of our purchases is from the bigger land-lords and though there may be a few instances where there may have been difficulties in securing the entire surplus paddy from them, in the majority of cases they have co-operated with the Government in selling the surplus paddy. I know instances where some of them had to undergo difficulties for having not reserved sufficient quantity of paddy with them for their domestic consumption in selling out their surplus to the Government. In the case of most of the big jenmies we have got very reliable records to show what their normal requirements are. Most of them have kept accounts of pre-war days which are open to our inspection. Wherever possible their requirements are fixed after scrutinising them with these accounts.

Some complaints have been made here about the conduct of our officers engaged in Grain Purchase Work. Government do not claim that they are perfect in every respect, but I would respectfully remind the Hon'ble Member that these officers are engaged in every different work. From the very nature of things, they have to go against the wishes of several people. What they carry out the rules strictly and fail to make concession to individual demands which has to be done often in the larger interests of the people to obtain all available surplus of paddy. They are likely to court the displeasure of such people. So it is possible that exaggerated reports will be made about alleged irregularities on their part. So I would request the Hon'ble Members to make careful enquiry when such reports reach them and inform the higher authorities if they think there is anything wrong so that proper action may be taken. I may submit to the House that there has not been any whisper of corruption against the superior officers engaged in the Grain Purchase Work. These officers have to work hard day and night, without rest and some time even without food. It will be unfair to make sweeping allegations to want of tact and common sense, etc., on the part of minor officers merely because there have been some lapses on the part of the various officers who work under their immediate supervision.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* But they are proved facts.

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies):* I say it is not. It is a matter of opinion.

Distribution.—I now come to the distribution side. There have been complaints that the selling price of rice is too high and that Government should subsidise the selling price of rice if there is no other way of selling it cheap. The method by which the selling price of rice is arrived at has already been explained to this House during the Budget Session. We have to get rice at comparatively high cost from outside. It varies from about Rs. 28 to 60 per bag of 2½ maunds. An average pooled price of all varieties of rice we ge, both local and outside is taken and on that basis the selling price is fixed. Our present rates are Rs. 27—5—8 for a bag of 162 lbs.

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gross (about 2 maunds) for sale in places where there are Government Depots and Rs. 26—13—8 in other places. These rates approximate to our average cost price including transport and other incidental charges. The average cost price will depend upon the extent of the quantity of rice purchased here and imported from outside. When the figure for imported rice goes up the average cost also proportionately rise as the average cost of imported rice comes to about Rs. 40 for a bag of two maunds. Our average cost of rice for the current year both home-grown and imported taken together, will, it is estimated be in no way lower than our present selling rate. This pooled price is made to approximate to our cost price. It may also be noted that Government do not take into account the establishment charges in calculating the price of the foodstuffs we sell. We have already subsidised the sale of other foodstuffs, *viz.*, wheat, barley, bajra, maize, and pulses like moong, moongdhall, etc. Now our consumption of wheat is roughly only a little below half that of rice. The subsidy in wheat comes to a little over 4 pies per pound. So a pretty large amount is contributed by Government by way of subsidy, for wheat alone. It is necessary that our people should consume wheat in sufficiently large quantities to supplement their meagre rice ration. Unless wheat is supplied cheap to the people there will be little inducement on their part to take to it as the majority of them are not accustomed to the use of wheat as a common article of food. Hence the Government think it proper and necessary to subsidise. wheat. Under the circumstances, Government do not find it possible to grant a further subsidy and contribute to any extent for the sale of rice at a reduced rate. I may once again report here the assurance already given to this House that Government do not have the least intention of making any gain out of the sales of foodstuffs. On the other hand Government stand by the assurance given by the Diwan Peishkar during the Budget Session that any gain which may accrue out of the transactions relating to foodstuffs will pass on to the consumer. From the statement of accounts published already by the Government, it will be seen that the transactions of 1118 brought in a small margin of profits. After this was ascertained Government have made a further reduction in the price of wheat, *viz.*, to annas 4 per edangazhi, which will more than cover the slight profit noticed in 1118.

The effect of price control in the State finance began to be felt from about the close of 1941 when Government decided to open depots all over the State and sell rice purchased from the local market to retailers and consumers at prices fixed by the Government from time to time. The intention of the Government then in opening such depots was to stabilise the market price for rice by issuing it to retailers at control prices and thereby making it available to the public at reasonable cost. These control prices were fixed in the advice of non-official committee presided over by the Diwan Peishkar and for some time by the Food Production Commissioner and also by the Commissioner of Civil Supplies. Government had not prevented private merchants from conducting sales in rice, wholesale or retail. During this period, in fixing the control rate of the selling price of rice, one main factor that was taken into consideration by the Government was the then prevailing market rate for this commodity, presumably because private merchants who had imported rice would be severely affected if the Government competed with them and sold rice at lesser price. Hence the control price of rice depends more on the price at which it became available from abroad to merchants, rather than on the cost incurred by the Government to secure it. The market position as regards rice, in the early period of food control changed almost everyday, so much so that it was not possible for the Government to follow fixed price based on the cost price of stock purchase at lower prices till it was sold away, as the same prices controlled the whole markets in the State. Hence rice purchased by Government had to be sold at rates higher than its cost price. Large stocks of rice were dealt with in the early stages in this manner and these have necessarily, to result in a net profit to the Government. Such a state of things continued till April 1943, by which time we introduced rationing throughout the State and prohibited the sale of rice and paddy except through licensed retailers.

Even before the introduction of rationing, huge stocks of rice and some of the essential commodities were purchased by Government at favourable rates and sold at control rates. The policy of Government in the earlier stages was to fix separate price for each variety of rice or paddy. Hence if the price of Bezwada rice changed at the source we used to revise the selling price of that rice here also. In this way price varied often. In effecting changes, though the stock with us at that time was also taken into consideration, it was not possible to separate the stocks into consideration, it was not possible to separate the stocks purchased at lesser prices from those at higher prices and so the revision of price used to be given them in hand. The trend of prices was always upwards and so the revision of prices almost always resulted in some gain to the Government.

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The steady increase in the cost of living index and the cost of agricultural labour have made the land-holders demand for frequent revision of the purchase price of paddy. The situation was being carefully watched and whenever it was felt that their claims deserved consideration, the price was revised. But such a revision necessitated the automatic revision of the sale price of rice sold by Government had therefore to be revised often, the rates being increased every time. At each such revision the stock in hand appreciated in value. This has led to an unavoidable increase on the credit side to the extent of a few lakhs of rupees.

Another factor which has to be taken into account is the difficulty in arriving at absolutely correct calculations when prices are fixed, for want of sufficient data. We are dealing in huge quantities of rice besides some other essential articles. On the whole, we are selling twenty-four articles through Government shops and depots. The addition or deduction of a fraction of pie to one unit (one fourth edangali) will make a difference of lakhs of rupees. Very often, when the average cost price of a unit is struck, fraction of a pie comes in. In such cases, the fraction had to be rounded up so as to raise it to the next round figure to avoid heavy commitment on the part of Government as otherwise considerable loss is likely when accounts are taken of the total sales. Any other course would seem to be unsafe and hazardous as such prices are often to be fixed in the course of the year, and it will not be possible on those occasions to have definite information as to the exact financial results of the transactions till then.

We are selling both imported and home-grown rice at a pooled price from March 1943 (middle of 1118). A large portion of the imported rice was from Sind. From the very outset we protested against the high prices in Sind. Strong representations made about it to the Central Government and Sind Government at first were of no avail. A reduction in price was secured later on, which was only in 1119. But we got a rebate in freight from the Sind Government which has gone to reduce our cost price to a small extent on the stock sold in 1118.

Quality of rice.—I have dealt with the points at length this morning and explained the position of the Government in a statement made by me by way of answer to the question from the Hon'ble Member for Vadakkancheri.

The Hon'ble Member for Adoor had a severe complaint to make on the point. It is a gross exaggeration and has been effectively answered by the Hon'ble Member Mr. Walmsely who testified the effect that his enquiries showed that there was nothing wrong with the quality of rice supplied from Trichur to Mukundapuram Taluks to which areas, the Hon'ble Member for Adoor was referring. I may here add that we seldom had any reserve stock exceeding two months and even such a reserve we began to accumulate only very recently. Hence there is little likelihood for the rice being spoiled by prolonged stocking as referred to by the Hon'ble Member for Adoor.

There is then the distribution of paddy. This matter has already been discussed on the floor of this House four days back in connection with the cut motion on a supplementary grant, by the Hon'ble Member for Adoor. I then explained to the House the difficulties to issue the paddy purchased as paddy itself, *viz.*, want of sufficient storage, space difficulty for speedy transport, etc. It was the Hon'ble Member for Nellai who imputed a motive for the Government for adopting the present method of converting the paddy into rice before distributing it. The suggestion was that the Government would unnecessarily waste money for this if it were possible to avoid it. It is also uncharitable on the part of the Hon'ble Member to have thought that the Government wanted to help a particular sort of people in this matter. I regret that such an observation happened to be made by my Hon'ble friend with his vast experience of men and things.

Dry Grains.—The Hon'ble Mover gave expression to a belief in some quarters that the Government are selling dry grains at a higher rate than the cost price. This is absolutely untrue. Government are not only not selling dry grains excess of the cost price but on the other hand the Government are selling several of them at subsidised prices. The Hon'ble Member for Commerce alleged that the price of some of the food-grains sold by Government is in excess of the market rate. He quoted two instance to support his statement. They are (1) Gramdhall and (2) Toordhall. In the first place, I find myself unable to accept the correctness of the rates given by the Hon'ble Member. My enquiry in the Ernakulam Market goes to show that these articels are sold at higher rates than Government rates. The market rates of gramdhall and toordhall are 7 annas and 8 annas, as against the Government rates of Rs. 0—6—4 and Rs. 0—7—8 respectively for that article.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Will you please give the rates in the same terms?

Mr. President: The Hon'ble Member is entitled to give the prices as actually quoted in the market.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* He is replying to the Hon'ble Member for Commerce who quoted the price.

Mr. President: Order, order. The Hon'ble Member must be allowed to give the prices in the terms in which he ascertained them. If any body wishes to have them in any other terms for comparison, he is at liberty to work them out.

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies)* In order to properly explain any difference in the selling rates, it should be known when the expected stocks were purchased and from where. The difference here is, after all, not much even according to the Hon'ble Member. I may also bring to the notice of the House that it often happens that when Government begin to deal in a particular commodity the merchants attempt to undersell their stock. Such a state of thing is inevitable under the present circumstances. But for the fact that Government themselves began to import these commodities and started selling them the market rates would have been considerably higher. When the present Government price for these above articles were fixed, this prevailing market price were 20 to 50 per cent higher. (In Travancore where Government sales do not take place, price continue to be high) The price of maida-flour went up to Rs. 120 per bag, till the Government began to sell it, when the market rate came down. Government sold it at about Rs. 36 per bag of equal weight. Similarly, sugar was being sold by merchants at Rs. 60 and above per bag, before Government took up the import and sale of this article, which is at about Rs. 46 per bag of equal weight. In fact, one object of the Government in undertaking the import and sale of these commodities is to keep down the prices at a reasonable level, even at the cost of some loss to the Government. So the point to be noted is that the fact that the market rates are lower shows the success of the policy adopted by Government in dealing with the articles concerned. Government cannot always effect corresponding reduction in the prices when the market rates fluctuates. Sometimes such reduction in market prices are temporary and brought for reasons far from holy. We have to take account of Government stock and also of private stock and the public demand for it before altering our rates. When it is possible and necessary to reduce our rates, we have done, it (e. g., This was done in the case of moong and moongdhall).

Deterioration.—When we are dealing in huge quantities of food-stuffs some loss due to deterioration is unavoidable. But I may submit to the House that the loss in this respect has been minimised as far as possible. Our chief difficulty is in respect of wheat. We have got an accumulation of stock because our consumption is not adequate. Till now it was necessary, in view of our precarious food position, to stock a large quantity of wheat as there was no assurance that we would get the required quantity of rice. We had been informed by the Government of India that, unless the stock of wheat offered for a particular time were not taken delivery of, the Central Government could not guarantee to supply the article when needed. In view of the difficulties involved in the purchase and transport of sufficient stocks from the supply areas in time, Government did not think it safe to refuse the stocks offered from time to time. The difficulty and loss that may result due to accumulation of stock have already been taken to the notice of the Government of India. It is hoped, that, in future, it will be possible to minimise our difficulties in this respect. We are, however, taking particular care to issue all food-stuffs in good condition. Special instructions have been given to the retailers to accept only articles which are of good quality for human consumption.

Compulsory Issue of Wheat.—This is necessary for several reasons. In the first place a certain amount of non-rice food-grains is necessary to supplement our meagre rice ration to preserve the life of the people. Unless there is an element of compulsion it is found from experience that people will not take to it, but will try to manage with the little rice they get. What is the only article which the ration card holders are to purchase compulsorily and here also the element of compulsion is very limited. Such an element of compulsion in other parts of South India also.

Rationing—Delay in renewal of cards.—Some delay is inevitable. But every attempt is being made to minimise it and we are paying special attention to this matter and have also instructed the officers that in the case of applications for the issue of fresh cards provisional cards should be issued pending enquiry wherever it can be done.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Requirements.—Our total population is now estimated to be a little over 15 lakhs. Our rationed population comes to over 13 lakhs. From the very nature of things the rationed population will be frequently varying as there are a large number of the population who have their own paddy for consumption for some part of the year and another set of people who get paddy as wages in kind. A ration of one pound per adult per day has been admitted to be a normal ration in India. The rice we have able to produce locally under normal conditions will be only about less than half of what is sufficient for us. In view of the difficulty experienced by the Central Government to supply the whole deficit in rice we do not claim to get for the rationed population a rice ration anything more than 12 ounces per adult per day, the balance being supplemented by wheat. But any ration which does not include a minimum of 8 ounces rice per day will be absolutely inadequate to perserve the vitality of the people here. We have also to give extra ration to heavy manual labour, college students, and also to some persons employed in essential services. Based on actual experience in the past as regards the off-take, to meet our deficit in rice, we have to get a little over 1 lakh tons of rice for a 12 ounce ration and about 60,000 tons rice for an 8 ounce ration. It will be seen from what has been stated by me already that our allotments from outside during the present kariff year plus the balance quota to our credit will amount only to about 60,000 tons. It is necessary for us to get adequate transport facilities to move entire quota of rice to enable us to give a ration of 8 ounces rice every day with out break.

From our past experience there is reason to apprehend that it may not be possible due to reasons beyond our control to move the entire quota in time. The following figure will bear out the above Statement.

Period	*Quota allotted*	*Quantity received*
1-12-42 to 31-7-43	33,400 tons	18,950 tons
1- 8-43 to 1-12-43	8,070 ,,	5,180·4 ,,
1-11-43 to 31-10-44	53,277·8 ,,	32,422·79 ,,

Cancellation or reduction of quotas once allotted also some times happen. This is another factor which dislocates our distribution arrangements and makes it difficult for us to meet the minimum requirements of the people. The situation is not, therefore, free from anxiety. But we can take couragement from the the recent pronouncements made by the Hon'ble Food Member to the Government of India, both in the Central Assembly and outside and also the kind assurance made to us by him personally to that effect, that the Government of India are fully alive to the necessity of placing enough stocks with us not only to enable us to give an 8 ounce rice ration, but also, if possible, to raise it to 12 ounces every day. Government, therefore, hope that in the immediate future it will be possible to give at least an 8 ounce rice ration on all days in the month.

Wheat.—The Central Government have placed with us enough stock of wheat to meet our requirements. We are now giving only 4 ounces of wheat in our ration. We could double this quantity but we find from actual experience that it will not serve any practical purpose as the people have no liking for it. It is as a result of vigorous propaganda conducted by both official and non-official agencies among the masses of the State about the advantages of consuming it, by opening Cochin Restaurants where edible preparations made out of wheat and other dry grains were sold at cheap rates. By Government subsidised sales of these grains and also by insisting on a compulsory purchase of wheat to the extent of ¼ the quantity of rice issued, that it has been possible to bring the off-take of wheat to its present level which is about half that of rice. It has been found from actual rationing experience that the off-take figures here is dependent on the percentage of rice included in the unit food ration.

It is necessary in this connection to state that the type of wheat received now is unfamiliar to the people of the State and what is relished by them is the type of wheat called 'long wheat' also know as 'Champa wheat' and 'kapla wheat' obtainable from the Western Indian States of Nawanagar, Junaga and Jamnagar. There is surplus stock in these States, but they want bajra in exchange which is badly needed there. Certain people of Cochin especially diabetic patients require this kind of wheat only, which is not obtainable now. Its advantage lies in the fact that it can be cooked and eaten almost like rice unlike the other varieties of wheat which is more suitable for consumption in flour form. We arranged to get by way of change of some quantity of long wheat this year, but due to transport and other difficulties we have not been able to obtain any quantity so far. A quota for about 70 tons of long wheat, has been arranged to be purchased without any liability for us to give bajra in exchange but on cash basis audit is expected to arrive seen from Junagad State.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Sugar.—The State's requirements according to pre-war figures are about 15,000 tons per annum. Mr. Kirby, Rationing Advisor to the Government of India, recommended 13,000 tons against this, the qnantity available for consumption for 1942-43 was 2,900 tons only. The quota for this 1943-44 was 5,000 tons. Even this is not at all adequate to meet the minimum needs of the people. We are now issuing generally a ration for 18 ounces of sugar per head per month subject to a maximum of 20 lbs. per family. It is only by a most judicious use of the quantity at our disposal, by restricting it to those who are in real need of it, that it has been possible to get on with the quota allotted for 1943-44. We have pressed the Sugar Controller to allot an increased quantity of sugar for this year 1944-45.

Gur—.We secured a quota of 7,000 tons of gur from Madras Province besides about 300 tons from the United Provinces for the period from 1st December 1943 to 30th November 1944. In the meanwhile the Gur Control Order was passed in the State on the lines of the Government of India Order and it came into force on 30th Makaram 1119. Under the directions contained in the order the quota was arranged to be got from Madras direct by the State Government and arrangements made for its sale through Government Fair Price Shops and other selected merchants. The old system was found to be unsatisfactory and had to be abandoned. The Madras Government appointed an Assistant Marketing Officer for work connected with the purchase, inspection and despatch of the jaggery to be exported from that Province. The Assistant Marketing Officer or his assistants will inspect the goods before the consignment are put on rail and satisfy themselves as to the quality of jaggery, weight, etc. In accordance with the above scheme only about 1,000 tons were able to be despatched to the State, till June 1944 owing to the difficulty in getting wagons. On 30th May 1944 the Provincial Marketing Officer, Madras intimated to the State that the quota allotted to the State may be purchased by theGovernment in one lot and that the merchants may be advised to store the jaggery in important distributing centres in the State or to store it in the place of purchase itself and move it in instalments to the State. As a result of representations made to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies, Madras, it was afterwards decided to continue the then system of despatching the balance quota through the Provincial Marketing Officer. The import of jaggery was very irregular still. Difficulty in getting sufficient wagon facilities was the chief factor. The Madras Government had accumulated stock and they wanted to dispose of the stock soon. They, therefore, changed the system of despatch of jaggery and decided to issue permits to private merchants to export jaggery to the State against the State quota. This was communicated to us in there letter dated 12th August 1944, No. 4433/CS/44 and further clarifications were issued on 26th August 1944 and 1st September 1944. Some permits were also issued to private merchants under this scheme. This change in the system was likely to affect adversely the mode of distribution of jaggery in the State. Distribution of jaggery that was being done directly helped them through Government agencies. This stystem has greatly helped the Government to ensure the supply of jaggery to the public at reasonable rates. It was found possible to continue this scheme only if the purchase and distribution of jaggery were done under direct control of the Government. The purpose of the control exercised by the Government was likely to be defeated by allowing private merchants to import the quota. By a Departmental Order dated 29th Augst 1944, issued under Notification No. 93, dated 18th Dhanu 1119 the stock of jaggery imported till then by private merchants under permits issued by the Madras Government was freezed and steps were taken to purchase such stock by Government. The stock was subsequently purchased by the Government at reasonable rates. This took some time due to protracted correspondance by telegrams and letters and personal representatious with the Madras authorities. To make an equitable distribution and to have a stable market, the Government had to adopt such measures. To avoid in future the difficulties of the kind mentioned above, Government have, as per Notification 41, dated 28th Kanni 1120 prohibited the import of gur into the State without the sanction of the Director of Food Supplies.

Jaggery.—The purchase of jaggery imported by merchants was, based on the price they paid and the incidental charges incurred by them in bringing it here. The selling price of jaggery is pooled price arrived at by the Government considering the average price of the total stock purchased by Government from time to time. Government have to incur expenses of storage, transport and less by melting etc. Hence a reasonable price was fixed after taking all these facts into consideration. It may also be stated that the selling price of jaggery was fixed by Government, at 4 annas per pound, while Government are selling jaggery at 3 annas 4 pies per pound. The higher selling price was fixed because there was private jaggery in the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

market, part of which was known to have been purchased at higher rates. It is with a view to avoid hardship to the merchants that the selling rate was not put at a lower rate. We subsequently reduced the selling price to 3 annas 4 pies per pound. By that time most of the stock purchased already by merchants had been exhausted. Subsequently we reduced the selling price further as the market rates in surrounding areas have fallen and more over we had also a much larger stock with us and sales had to be pushed on to avoid unnecessary waste. The accumulation of stock is a result of the circumstances already explained in connection with the grant of permits to private merchants by the Madras Government.

At present, by the arrangements made with the Madras Government, we are importing gur under direct Government Control and an officer has been deputed by this Government to make the purchases.

Tapioca.—The Hon'ble Members will remember that a rigid control over tapioca had to be introduced in Meenam 1118 because it was found necessary then and in view of our acute food situation. It was for this very reason that the Government encouraged its cultivation. The fundamental factor to be remembered in this connection is that tapioca is a cheap and popular food with large portion of the people in the State. As the food situation improved Government gradually relaxed the control over this commodity one by one with the result that the present control is only with regard to its export and its conversion into its re-products such as starch, sago, and flakes. Government also, a few months back, allowed conversion of a limited quantity of tapioca into sago and flakes to absorb the surplus tapioca available after the quantity required for consumption in the raw or dried form. There are now five factories engaged in this manufacture, 3 at Trichur, 1 at Wadakkancheri and one at Irinjalakkuda. Private tapioca also is used in the last two factories while in the others the conversion is of the tapioca produced by the Hill Paddy Department. On the whole a quantity of 663 tons of raw tapioca have been converted and also 70 tons of sago and flakes obtained.

2. There have been loud complaints from persons interested in the tapioca cultivation that the steps Government have adopted to absorb the surplus tapioca produced in the State are not adequate to meet the situation and that more effective measures should be taken for this purpose as otherwise the cultivators will be faced with huge loss. Various suggestions have been put forward then for absorbing the surplus tapioca. They are.—

(*i*) to allow free export of raw tapioca;

(*ii*) to purchase the entire surplus available in the State by the Government for sale from Government shops in different forms; and

(*iii*) to allow free conversion of raw tapioca into starch, sago and flakes.

(*i*) It is to be pointed out that there is no objection to allow the export of tapioca into the neighbouring States or Province provided it is required there for bonafide purposes of consumption and also the State or Provinces concerned to not object it. In the sister State of Travancore, the situation is equally, if not more, difficult, because of the over-production of this commodity. The only possible place to which we can export this stuff is British Malabar or Coimbatore Districts. Government have no objection to allow such export provided the application for export is supported by any responsible authority there. The persons concerned in this business have already been informed accordingly.

(*ii*) The second suggestion is that Government should purchase the entire surplus available in the State for resale through rationing shops. This is not feasible. It is not reasonable to expect the Government to purchase all commodities of which there is excess production in the State. Government money and labour are to be spent only in the case of essential commodities when there is difficulty to obtain sufficient stocks thereof. When there is sufficient supply of a particular commodity in the country the only proper course of the Government is to allow the natural economic law to govern the market. It is, however, urged that in various parts of the State the cheapness of the articles is very much appreciated by them. The price in most of the towns is somewhere about 5 to 6 pies per pound and in the rural areas it sells at about 4 pies per pound for raw tapioca. Hence there is difficulty to accede to the request for conversion of tapioca into starch. There is then the conversion of it into sago or flakes. It is now being done to a limited extent under Government supervision as stated above. It is, however, thought not desirable to allow everyone to do it, because it may then lead to the conversion of an unjustifiably large portion of the available stock. It should be remembered that the conversion into sago or flakes involves the conversion of raw

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

tapioca into starch from which, other products are manufactured. So, if everyone is allowed to manufacture these two bi-products there is the likelihood of the concession being abused by certain people for selling it in the form of starch which is likely to fetch a very high profit in foreign markets. As this is a process which can be easily done in every cottage, there will be great difficulty to effectively check its manufacture. Hence it is that the Government have thought it fit to restrict the conversion of raw tapioca into sago and flakes in the manner stated above.

3. In view of the strong representations made from various quarters that all possible help should be rendered to the tapioca cultivators to find out a market for their produce, the present stock position of tapioca and the method in which the surplus stock could be utilised were carefully examined by the Government very recently. It was decided that the ban on the production of starch should renew, that the controlled manufacture without any such help by the Government, great loss will be sustained by the tapioca cultivators, but such sharp fluctuations in the price of agricultural commodities are not uncommon. It may be pointed out that last year huge profits have been made by the tapioca growers. This should go to mitigate the extent and severity of the loss, if any, they may sustain this year.

(*iii*) As regards the third suggestion, to allow free conversion of raw tapioca into starch, sago or flakes, Government are at present allowing the conversion into sago and flakes in a limited scale. The factories concerned are working under Government supervision. This restriction has been imposed in order to prevent more than the allowable quantity of tapioca being used for this purpose. It is necessary here to explain in detail why such a restriction is necessary. It may be remembered that the cultivation of tapioca was vigorously canvassed from all quarters as a part of the "Grow More Food Campaign" in order to relieve the acute scarcity of rice in the State. Though the situation as regards rice has somewhat improved, we are still not out of the wood. Our rice ration is still very meagre. We want a substitute for rice. It is a popular food among the poorer classes. It becomes a nutritive food when taken along with fish and other like commodities. Again, on account of its cheapness, it is purchased in large quantities by a portion of our people, especially the poorer classes. So, it will be unpardonable if we utilised this commodity for conversion into any form other than food, without leaving sufficient quantity for consumption by the people. From enquiries made it is seen that poor people are now buying raw tapioca in large quantities of sago and flakes should be continued, but under a slightly different method in the exercise of the control. The suggestion is that selected concerns may be allowed to manufacture sago and flakes to the extent allowed by the Government for which export also may be granted. But a reasonable amount by way of duties will be imposed on the bi-products fixed by the Government, to act as a check on the unrestricted conversion of raw tapioca into flakes and sago. For the present the tax will be fixed at 4 annas per pound. The net profit from the tax will be set apart exclusively for food subsidy. Only those who are given a licence by the Director of Food Supplies should be allowed to undertake the manufacture. They should conform to the conditions of the licence.

The quantity each factory can convert per month shall be fixed, subject to revision from time to time.

Proper registers shall be maintained by the factories.

All factories will be subject to supervision by the officers of the Department.

4. Government are aware of the fact that in Travancore conversion into starch has been allowed under strict control and supervision of the Government. But we are not sure of the exact prevailing conditions there. I may submit to the House that the supreme factor to be considered in judging this question is what is the best interest of the masses of this State. Here is a commodity which they do require and for which they should not be made to pay heavily. There is no other cheap substitute for this available at present. We have been forced to give up the imports of some cheap foreign foodstuffs as people do not show any inclination to take to it. It would not be prudent and proper therefore, to allow the indigenous product to be used in other forms for industrial purposes. Government are therefore, reluctant to allow conversion into starch for this purpose unless there is a compelling necessity for it to avoid waste.

Machinery for purchase from outside.—Some of the Hon'ble Members complained about the Government monopoly for purchase and distribution of foodstuffs. It was suggested that Government could get all these things done through merchants, who, on account of their experience in business, could do it in a better manner and also at cheaper rates. This is not the first time that

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

we hear such complaints in this House. It may be remembered that Government were not in this line at all to start with. It is because the established trade channels failed and failed miserably in this respect that Government had to step in. Government undertook this difficult task because there was a loud demand for it from the public and from this House and Government, thought it is necessary in the larger interests of the people. All authorities competent to speak on this subject have only appreciated in the wisdom of the step taken by the Government. From experience in other places where the authorities have hesitated or delayed in taking such bold step the consequences have been disastrous to the people. It is not the desire of the Government to undertake this difficult task for one moment longer than it is absolutely necessary in the public interests. Government information is that the handling of the essential articles by Government has gone a great way to stabilise the prices in the market and make the various articles available to the people in the State at comparatively cheaper rates than elsewhere. Some of our Rice Officers who are employed elsewhere have also come in for criticism. Their inexperience in the line was pointed out as a cause for the bad quality and high prices. This only shows ignorance as to mode of purchase adopted in regard to articles imported from outside. These Rice Officers are not purchasing officers. The purchase in most of the supplying areas is now done by the respective Government or Government controlled agencies. In places where there are no Government agencies the articles are sold to us at rates in fixed or approved by Government. Where such a ystem does not exist the purchase is done by established firms on our behalf and not by the officers of this Government.

Milk distribution.—The Hon'ble Member for Trippunithura took objection to the method adopted by the Government in the distribution of free milk. It is now being issued to potable from various centres through private agencies, who have undertaken the work. They are doing it with enthusiasm and care. They are also spending small sums of money from their own pocket for preparing it in boiled water. The milk is intended for poor people. The suggestion of the Hon'ble Member to issue it in powder form was considered. In view of our present scarcity of milk in the State, there is the danger of the poor people selling it in the market for money and thus fail to get the benefit intended by its distribution. Hence we have thought it fit to issue the milk in potable form.

Before I conclude, I may be permitted to state that the Government do not think that perfection has reached in the working of the various schemes undertaken by them in regard to food and price control. But Government do claim that they are doing their utmost to see that every thing possible is done to make food available to the people at reasonable prices and distribute them equitably. Persons who are competent to speak on this subject, official and non-official both in the State and outside it, had occasion to express their approval of the soundness of the system we have adopted and appreciated their working in practice.

I may assure the House that such appreciations will not swail our heads. It would only act as a source of inspiration and hopes to the officers of the Department to make more strenuous efforts and continue to work untirringly for the more efficient and proper working of the several schemes undertaken by the Government, in regard to our food matters for the benefit of our people.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Mr. President, I am not in the least surprised at the great imperviousness and self-complacency of the Government. That is the only attitude that they can think of, in the light of the scathing criticism that was made by member after member about the administration of the Food policy. We were very considerate, Sir, to the Government and their servants right from its energetic head down to the very last man employed in that department, because we recognised, Sir, that it was a new venture and we would not criticise them from the very beginning. We gave them a blank cheque, we allowed them to work as they like according to the lights and we were observing things and we were making suggestions to them from time to time in the hope, Sir, that there will be suitable reactions to our suggestions made from time to time. Nearly two years have rolled by since the absolutely necessary system of commandeering and rationing had been introduced. We have ungrudgingly co-operated with the Government and things have worked. Difficulties of the people especially the poor and the paddy-grower have been pointed out but none, Sir, has been rectified. That is the complaint.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

If only the Diwan President were here yesterday and also he could follow the Malayalam language and if he had listened to the observations of the Hon'ble Member sitting to my right here (the Hon'ble Member for Anthikad) here I am sure, Sir, many servants of the Department of Food Supplies would have got his sack by this morning. He was asking, Sir, in all seriousness after pointing out the various difficulties experienced by the subjects of the State to conduct hotels instead of commandeering and rationing, to give packets of rice **"Pothichoru"**, i.e., what he said. That will be most welcome, said he. We would gladly take it He was speaking, Sir, with a feeling not his own alone but of the people of the State. You have to reckon with this. Your self-complacency must go. Your imperviousness must go. Times are in store for you to account for all these things. The day of reckoning will come. Now, Sir, the ban on public meetings will be broken fully conscious of consequences thereof. Remember, Sir, some members of this House and also some people outside, you will have to confine in your jails if you continue your self-complacency. This imperviousness must go, I repeat. This self-complacency must and will melt away. Don't take shelter please, under the name of Sir J. P. Srivastava or for the matter of that under that Sir Henry French either. What was done with them? All a camouflage. Hon'ble men who wanted to study conditions in Cochin came here from far off Delhi and even from England. They were taken from place to place, selected and arranged previously. They have not been shown our villages or the conditions there. Better for all they were not quoted. A distinguished visitor visiting only the best institutions of the State, writes remarks in the Visitor's Book. Can we see any condemnation, Sir? No. That is not expected. These remarks cannot and are not taken for their face value. I had occasion to be in conversation with one of the distinguished visitors, as distinguished as the one above mentioned. I know what he has been shown. He himself told me about it last year when he visited the State. This year also I had the privilge to interview him. His observations he had published in the papers last year. I am referring to revered Pandit Khunzru.

What is it, Sir, that the Government have done? I had placed certain tangible constructive suggestions before the Government. These points were stressed and emphasised by all sections of this House. But most of them are unanswered. When I enquired this morning during question hour, what is the extent of stock in Government godowns, the Hon'ble Member for Supplies was not able to give me an answer. For that he claimed notice. He must have been ashamed of it. Has the stock been insured, Sir? Is not that money—the money taken from Banks on the pledge of the guilt-edged securities of the State? Supposing something amiss takes place in these godowns, where are we? What will be your defence? Can you take shelter under the wings of Sir Henry French? These things must change and I am sure you will be forced to change in spite of the imperviousness and self-complacency of the Supplies Department. Did the Hon'ble Member for Supplies ever care to answer the suggestion that the Fair Price Shops doing only the negligible work of selling sugar may be abolished? What is the difference, I ask, if you can trust licencees to deal with your other commodities and in very many others—and there is no complaint against them—why could you not believe them in the matter of selling sugar? What is the total number of hands, big, small, honest, dishonest that you have employed in the Department? If I remember aright, the number given in the Budget is 1,600, if not more. I do not grudge it, Sir, provided they do the work for the salt that they eat. It was stated that the suggestion of corruption is uncharitable. But the word was changed to unnatural afterwards. What is unnatural about it? A spade has to be called a spade. If facts told are considered uncharitable, we are helpless. But it will be proved and proved to the hilt. What have you done with the delinquents? Some of whom at least you have been able to book? Dispensed with services. You must have prosecuted him and got him incarcerated for life. During the preparation of the Electoral Rolls last time I have seen orders to the effect that if the progress was not satisfactory the minimum punishment would be dismissal. So, Sir, what should have been the punishment for an accomplice in smuggling? These delinqents ought to have been prosecuted. They must have been given exemplory punishments. If you have been reading newspapers, you would have seen what is happening in British India. For selling 13 bags of rice unauthorisedly what is the punishment meted out? Rs. 3,000 fine and 18 months rigorous imprisonment. That is making an example of the delinquent for the benefit of others. So long as you do these things in the way it is being done, things will be what they are and things will not remain as they are. Let the Government mark it, Sir, it is the stomach that is affected. Sir, there is a limit for everything. There are hard times for us, we think, but more for the Government if they will not rectify things. I don't wish to say that anything more just now. This self-complacency must go, otherwise it

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

will be driven away. I was suprised to hear the Hon'ble Member for supplies in the Strain in which he replied to the debate. When it suits his purpose, he will quote an Hon'ble Member on this side. Why not quote the Hon'ble Member for Planters, who contributed to the debate? And the suggestion he gave the Government, the Government are not prepared to act upon. Will you act upon his suggestion with regard to intensive and extensive cultivation? Why was it not referred to in your speech? Then what about subsidy to the cultivators of paddy. You put up an opposition which is not worth the paper on which it is *typed*. The Government has put up the defence. The representatives of the people have stated the people's case. Who is to decide the case? Place the Governments' case and the peoples' case before an impartial tribunal. Let a Judgement be written. The Judgment, I am aure, will be cent percent in our favour. If it is placed before an *impartial tribunal*, it can only be so. You will not even insure peoples' money, even where it stands at some crores.

Mr. President: Will the Hon'ble Member kindly conclude as soon as possible? I would just like to inform the Hon'ble Member that it is most exceptional for any Government to insure its stock. Government as a rule do business on a certain large scale that they carry on their own insurance. In exceptional cases it may be desirable to insure property. The desirability of insuring these stocks has been looked into and will be looked into again. I take it the Hon'ble Member has finished and I think he does not wish any vote to be taken on this.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkanchieri):* I have stated the peoples' case, Sir, and I am thankful to the responsible statement just enumated from the Diwan President. As to concluding my remarks, I could have done as much earlier, because the Government defence is not feeble but also not to the points raised by me and unanimously supported by every section of the non-official benches. I do not want to have a vote taken because my objects as stated in my opening remarks, starting the debate, is not to administer a defeat to the Government though that is the easiest to do. I wish, Sir, that the Diwan of Cochin be pleased to do on a careful study of the whole debate. I thank the House for the unanimous support that they extended to my suggestion and you, Sir, for your kind indulgence. I am done.

Motion of dissatisfaction regarding the bifurcation of the Panchayat and Public Works Departments

Mr. President: Before the discussion on this motion starts I should like to express my view that in a grave matter of this sort where an attempt is made to express dissatisfaction at certain action taken by the Hon'ble Minister, it is most desirable that before the House adjourns, a decision should be taken.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* The time is so short. There are only 75 minutes at our disposal.

Mr. President: That is why I mention the matter now, so that the Hon'ble Mover and any other Hon'ble Member who wishes to speak may adapt their speeches to the time available.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* Sir, I thought that this would become an important issue and so I requested you, Sir, to give me precedence over Mr. Ezhuthassan's motion. You were not good enough to give that.

M. A. B. Salem *(Mattancheri):* You cannot criticise the Chair.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* I abide by the ruling of the Chair. Mr. Ezhuthassan practically monopolised the whole time of the House in this Session.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* I question that. The facts show otherwise.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* May be. With 75 minutes available before us, it won't be possible to discuss the motion. I request the Hon'ble President to be pleased to give my motion precedence during the next meeting.

Mr. President: No, Sir. Having brought a motion of this sort, it must be argued out now. If the House is prepared to sit late this evening, I am prepared to sit.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* I have got other engagements this evening, and so I can't sit late. Then I will not be moving the motion. I request that I may be allowed not to move the motion.

Mr. President: The Hon'ble Member should withdraw it or move it. If the Hon'ble Member does not move it now, he must be understood to have withdrawn it.

Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* I have not already moved it. If the motion is moved, of course, it must be withdrawn. I am not going to move it.

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